

is proposing to organise similar workshops to produce guidelines for management of acute myocardial infarction and congestive cardiac failure. The committee is conscious of the risk of "reinventing the wheel" and of producing documents which will rapidly be forgotten. Other organisations are also formulating guidelines and it is proposed that there should be some liaison with the European Society of Cardiology.

Several colleagues have expressed concern over training in, and complications from, temporary cardiac pacing. The Joint Audit Committee, jointly with the British Pacing and Electrophysiology Group, is proposing to conduct a survey to find out whether there is a problem, and a brief questionnaire will be issued shortly to go with a simple form on which respondents can provide details of the next ten procedures for temporary wires.

Finally, Nick Brooks has resigned from the chairmanship of the committee and will be succeeded by David de Bono. The new chairman welcomes views on areas of practice to be considered by the committee, or any other comments or complaints, and can be contacted directly at his Leicester address shown above.

#### British Paediatric Cardiac Association

Last year (1992) was a year full of varied activities in the British Paediatric Cardiac Association. Three meetings of the BPCA were held in 1992. The first meeting was held at Coventry in April 1992 in conjunction with the British Paediatric Association. The second BPCA meeting was in conjunction with the British Cardiac Society at Harrogate in May 1992 and dealt exclusively with the Fontan operation, with the chief guest being Professor Fontan himself. Needless to say, all the questions about the operation were not answered but the discussion was lively. The third (autumn) meeting at Birmingham in November 1992 was a 2-day affair and again was extremely well attended. This dealt with various contentious topics as well as treatment of arrhythmias by radiofrequency ablation.

In 1993, once again, three meetings are proposed, one with the British Paediatric Association at Coventry in April 1993, one with the British Cardiac Society at Wembley in May 1993, and one solely a BPCA meeting at Harrogate on November 26–27, 1993. The last meeting will cover heart failure.

An important task that was suddenly thrust upon the BPCA Council was to produce, at a very short notice, a report appraising paediatric cardiology services for the Children's Specialty Review for the London Implementation Group. This has duly been submitted to the British Cardiac Society and British Paediatric Association.

The membership of the British Paediatric Cardiac Association has continued to increase this year and has reached almost 170 ordinary and candidate members.

There have been some important movements in paediatric cardiac surgery. Mrs Roxane McKay has resigned from the Royal Liverpool Children's Hospital and moved to Canada. Dr Marco Pozzi has been appointed in her place. Mr Pankaj Mankad has been appointed consultant paediatric cardiac surgeon at the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne.

#### Health care management and the cardiologist

Many will be aware of a letter sent by the NHS Management Executive to all regional general managers to the effect that "It is simply unacceptable to offer significantly different standards of care... depending on the time in the financial year at which they present". Surely all agree with these sentiments, but on reflection may find them hard to implement. Urgency is not categorical but relative. Severe three vessel disease with angina on minimal exertion may seem urgent until a patient with aortic dissection presents. It is often difficult to anticipate such events. However, all need to try to set an even pace of work throughout the year. Ultimately planning a contingency fund or surplus for the end of the year may be the only way of guaranteeing continuity of care, but this means limiting the access to health care of seemingly less urgent cases earlier in the financial year. Even patients at low risk can die while awaiting surgery and the cardiologist's decision may be criticised. It is easy to be wise after the event and retrospective judgments have a certain popular appeal.

A recent survey of consultants found that 3% of hospitals restricted emergency admissions, 17% barred all non-emergency admissions, 16% had admissions vetoed by managers, and 12% had quotas imposed on them. It is important that consultants' freedom to make clinical decisions is upheld but this can only be maintained if the privilege is used wisely.

Meanwhile the National Health Service Management Executive is about to review the weighted capitation formula for the distribution of health care resources in the light of the 1991 census data. The effects of this, and the possibility that funding allocation cannot be derived from any empirical formula, have been highlighted recently. Interested parties may care to read the article by Sheldon *et al* (Weighting in the dark: resource allocation in the new NHS. *BMJ* 1993;306:835–9). An increase in resources for one authority can only be obtained at the expense of others. Clearer explanations for the variation in need and utilisation of services is needed urgently if equality of health care is to be maintained.

#### News from Europe

Philip Poole-Wilson writes: "The Board of the European Cardiology Society has taken a formal decision to establish a *European Video Journal of Cardiology*. This will be a joint enterprise between the European Society of Cardiology, Kluwer Academic Publishers, and Cardio Diffusion. The purpose of this new journal is to keep all those interested in cardiovascular medicine up to date with new developments in research and clinical practice. Initially there will be six issues in each year. An editorial board has been formed. Prof Lars Ryden from Stockholm has been appointed editor in chief and Dr Nina Rosenqvist is deputy editor. Other members of the editorial board are Prof A Bayes de Luna, Prof G Breithardt, Prof J M Detry and Prof F Dienstl. This is a new venture into publishing using a new medium. Many of you will have received video recordings through your letter boxes and in America there are special channels on the television to receive medical broadcasts. It is probably a medium which

will have a considerable future in Europe. Feedback and comment on the new *European Video Journal of Cardiology* will be helpful. Please do look at the issues and if you wish to contribute contact the Editor."

#### British Cardiac Society Elections

As a result of recent elections, Raphael Balcon is to fill the vacant position of President Elect from May 1993, and Stewart Hunter, Hugh O'Kane, and Man Fai Shiu will join Council.

#### News of colleagues

The following consultant cardiologist appointments were made earlier this year. R J Wainwright as consultant in interventional cardiology at King's College Hospital, London; J J McMurray as consultant cardiologist to the Western General in Edinburgh; C Bucknall as consultant cardiologist at Guys Hospital, London; Dr P G Reid as consultant physician with a special interest in cardiology at Countess of Chester Hospital, Chester; Dr D Pennell as senior lecturer/honorary consultant in cardiac imaging at the Royal Brompton National Heart and Lung Hospital, London; Sheffield University interviewed four candidates for the chair of cardiology but failed to make an appointment.

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## NOTICES

The 1994 Annual Meeting of the **British Cardiac Society** will take place at the Riviera Centre, Torquay from 17 to 20 May.

The **International Workshop for Models for Atherosclerosis Research** organised by the European Society of Cardiology Working Group Pathogenesis of Atherosclerosis will take place in Bristol on 24 to 25 September 1993—Further details from Professor G D Angelini, Department of Cardiac Surgery, Bristol Royal Infirmary, Bristol BS2 8HW, United Kingdom.

The next **Journées Européennes of the Société Française de Cardiologie** will be held in Paris on the 13 to 15 January 1994. The closing date for abstracts is 15 July 1993. Further information is available from the Société Française de Cardiologie, 15 rue de Madrid, 75008 Paris, France (Tel: (1) 43.87.95.14. Fax (1) 43.87.17.14).

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